



Part 1: News Analysis

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This week's meeting between Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev turned the corner in the long-strained relations between the Caspian neighbors, ending a diplomatic break of seven years. While the thorniest issue – splitting up the Caspian seabed and the lucrative oil and gas reserves hidden beneath – remained unresolved, the two sides signed several economic and cultural agreements and Azerbaijan committed to repay \$44.8 million in Soviet-era gas debt.

The warm atmosphere and moves to reconcile the seabed issue through ministerial working groups have some observers predicting a new era of trans-Caspian economic partnership, which may deal a blow to Russia's dominance of export routes. In an interview with today.az, analyst Vafa Quluzade was willing to write off all past hostilities as largely a result of the erratic rule of Turkmen dictator Saparmurat Niyazov. Former Turkmen diplomat Chary Ihaniyazov told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that the profits to be made by both states in getting gas to European markets essentially dictated their rapprochement. Mikhail Korchemkin, director of the firm East European Gas Analysis, said that worldwide energy costs meant Turkmenistan could now ask for higher prices and perhaps get financing for pipeline construction.

The development of a pipeline under the Caspian to Azerbaijan, and the possibility of a linkage with the EU-backed Nabucco pipeline originating in Turkey, would help Turkmenistan meet its pledge to deliver 10 billion cubic meters of gas to the EU in 2009. But Turkmenistan's own assessment of all these lucrative prospects has been more cautious than many analysts'. In the past, Turkmen officials speaking at international conferences have remained noncommittal about Nabucco, or any other project that openly challenges Russia's near-monopoly on European export routes for Central Asian gas. Before the trip, Azerbaijan's Industry and Energy Minister Natic Aliyev said the two leaders would specifically discuss the linking of their pipelines and cooperation in fuel transport, RBC Daily reported. But after the meeting, President Berdymukhamedov carefully kept to generalities about the importance of continuing "constructive talks" at the working level and eventually harmonizing the positions of all five littoral states. The two leaders indicated a possible deadline for trying to resolve their disputes by agreeing to hold a joint oil and gas conference in Baku in September.

At a meeting with South Korean Prime Minister Han Seung-soo on May 16, President Berdymukhamedov reiterated the same offer he has made to Western oil and gas companies: to join a production-sharing agreement on developing Turkmenistan's Caspian hydrocarbon resources. The South Korean minister told *The Korea Times* that he had reached an understanding with the Turkmen president that his country could develop three of Turkmenistan's 32 gas fields.

On Constitution Day, May 18, President Berdymukhamedov laid the foundation for a new, \$70-million monument complex in the capital that appeared set to outdo even his predecessor's most ostentatious confections, the Associated Press commented. As with other recent events, the festivities were marred by a poor sound system, leading the president to issue a stern reprimand to the Minister of Communications and dismiss his deputy, who was also chastised for failing to develop Turkmenistan's Internet.

Hopeful of progress on constitutional changes anticipated for July, the OSCE convened a two-day meeting in Ashgabat in order to discuss legal reform. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities also visited Ashgabat and the Lebap region, praising reforms to date and offering the OSCE's assistance on legislation

and educational policy. In a move that underscores continuing mistrust in the criminal justice system, a Turkmen court sentenced civic activist Valery Pal to 12 years of imprisonment on May 15 on charges that human rights activists fear are fabricated.

Part 2: News Digest

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1. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

a. Turkmen President Berdymukhamedov Meets with Azerbaijani President Aliev

Original title: Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov and Ilham Aliev Hold Talks in Baku. Excerpt by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Source: Official Turkmen government website/Turkmenistan State Information Agency (TD/05/20/08

Full version: <http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/en/?idr=4&id=080520a>

Excerpt: [Passages omitted: greetings and importance of historic visit to Baku by Turkmen leader.]

During the talks held in the friendly and constructive atmosphere the leaders of the neighboring countries discussed the progress of the agreements, exchanged views on a broad range of Turkmen-Azerbaijani partnership and issues of mutual interest. The two leaders reviewed the countries’ efforts to harmonize positions on the legal status of the Caspian Sea. Reaffirming the mutual readiness to further enhance effective collaboration, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov and Ilham Aliev specified partnership priorities at the current stage. Key fields included the fuel and energy sector, transport and communication, agriculture, chemical and textile industries. The Presidents of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan unanimously called for furthering fruitful dialogue in the humanitarian sphere as an integral part of success of Turkmen-Azerbaijani relations.

[Passages omitted: on appreciation of cooperation through the Turkmen-Azerbaijani economic commission; on Azerbaijan’s support for UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy and Turkmenistan’s initiative for international pipeline security.]

Noting that the large-scale work to develop the oil and gas industry was carried out in Azerbaijan as well, President Berdymukhamedov said that this sector of economy had every requisite to be a very promising field of mutually advantageous bilateral cooperation. In this regard the Turkmen leader expressed belief that the international oil and gas conference, which will be held in Baku this autumn and will involve large companies and international financial and investment agencies, would offer a powerful incentive to facilitate large-scale

Turkmen-Azerbaijani partnership. President Berdymukhamedov said an agreement to hold the joint conference was reached during the talks with President Aliev.

[Passages omitted: on regional rail line and Turkmenbashi-Baku train ferry project and need to establish direct business relations and increase cultural and scientific exchanges.]

The Turkmen leader noted that the partners had accumulated a good deal of experience of cooperation on the legal framework for Caspian Sea-related issues. In this regard, the Turkmen leader noted the regular consultations of the expert groups of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan as an effective mechanism for Turkmen-Azerbaijani cooperation on the Caspian Sea.

[Passages omitted: on Berdymukhamedov's invitation to Aliev to visit Turkmenistan; on proposal for a joint business forum; on energy security and cooperation within multilateral institutions; on importance of cooperation in transport and communications sectors.]

[Passage omitted: on signing agreements on sports, highway services, standardization of measurements and accreditation, finance, and cooperation between ministries for commerce, industry, and foreign affairs; on press conference emphasizing new stage in bilateral relations and energy cooperation.]

Noting that the talks were focused on the Caspian Sea-related issues, Ilham Aliev stated the partners' common position regarding the Caspian Sea as a sea of peace and concord, friendship and cooperation. The Azerbaijani leader said that Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan are working actively to find mutually acceptable solutions. Stressing the high level of mutual understanding between the two neighboring countries reflected in bilateral documents, the President of Azerbaijan said that these documents defined the format and regulated but in no way limited the facilitation of expansion of bilateral cooperation. Ilham Aliev said that the Azerbaijani Government attached paramount importance to the Turkmen leader's visit and expected it to promote effectively intergovernmental dialogue.

[Passages omitted: on intensifying of political dialogue between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan in the last year; on intergovernmental economic commission; on increase in trade that still did not reflect bilateral potential; on oil and gas conference to be held in September in Baku to further expand collaboration; on need for constructive negotiations to harmonize the positions of five littoral states on the legal status of the Caspian Sea.]

b. Turkmen Leader Says Talks to Continue on Caspian Sea Legal Issues

Original title: Turkmenistan for Continuing Talks on Caspian Issue, Says Leader in Azerbaijan

Source: Interfax/05/19/09. Synopsis prepared by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Synopsis: Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan expect to continue talks on harmonizing the positions of the Caspian countries on the sea's legal status, Turkmen President Berdymukhamedov told journalists May 19, according to Interfax.

"We have come to a common view on the importance of continuing constructive talks on agreeing the positions of all five littoral counties regarding the legal status of the Caspian Sea. The resolution of this issue depends on realizing the need to turn the Caspian region into a zone of peace, good neighborliness, stability and mutually beneficial cooperation," he said.

The Turkmen leader said the signing of a convention on the sea's legal status was a top priority and that talks would continue within a special working group of deputy foreign ministers from the five states. "We believe that the determination of the Caspian Sea's status as soon as possible will make it possible to create favorable conditions for the effective and rational development of its hydrocarbon and natural resources, protecting and preserving the unique environmental system of the Caspian Sea, as well as for active economic cooperation in the Caspian Sea," the president was quoted as saying.

c. Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan Likely to Reach Agreement on Caspian: Analyst

Original title: *Plans to Build Transcaspian Pipeline Are Taking Shape*
Source: *RIA-Novosti/RBC Daily/05/20/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project*
Full version: <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080520/107869287.html>

Synopsis: After a long period of hostility, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan may reach agreement soon on Caspian Sea borders that would make the Transcaspian pipeline project feasible, RIA-Novosti reported, citing RBC Daily.

Before a summit between the two countries' leaders, Azerbaijan's Industry and Energy Minister Natic Aliev said the presidents would discuss the linking of oil pipelines and mutual assistance in fuel transport, RBC Daily reported. The U.S. and the European Union are supporting plans to bypass Russia in exporting oil from Central Asia. Last month, the EU reached an agreement with Turkmenistan on allocating 10 billion cubic meters of gas for the EU in 2009. Plans to construct a more than \$1 billion, 200-km pipeline from the Azerbaijani capital of Baku through Georgia to Erzurum in Turkey could facilitate Turkmenistan's becoming a source for the Nabucco gas pipeline from Turkey to the EU.

Mikhail Korchemkin, director of the East European Gas Analysis agency, says the project will be even more profitable for Turkmenistan than the pipeline along the Caspian Sea favored by Russia. "[T]ransportation costs in the Transcaspian project will be much lower, and it is quite possible that Turkmenistan will not have to pay construction costs," RBC reported him as saying. This could weaken Gazprom's position by giving Turkmenistan more export options, according to the outlet.

d. Past Enmity Between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan “Absolutely Artificial”: Azerbaijani Analyst

Original title: *Interview with Vafa Quluzad*
Source: *today.az/05/20/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project.*
Full version: <http://www.today.az/news/politics/45109.html>

Synopsis: In an interview with today.az, Azerbaijani political scientist and former government foreign policy adviser Vafa Quluzade said he felt the past tensions between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan were “absolutely artificial,” caused by the arbitrary and erratic former dictator Saparmurat Niyazov. “Considering the national interests of Turkmenistan, this country is doomed to maintaining best relations with Azerbaijan,” he said.

The two neighbors have much in common as Turkic-speaking Caspian littoral states, according to Quluzade. Both are producing oil and gas, and cooperation will help them attain more together than they would gain in isolation, he said.

As for the problems of the division of the Caspian sea, Quluzade commented, “I think the interests of Turkmenistan on the division of the Caspian shelf fully coincide with our [Azerbaijani], not Iranian interests. Iran speaks from position of a super state which wants the forced division of the established order.” If Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan harmonize their positions, then the other states will follow and Teheran will be forced to agree as well, he said.

On the conflict over the Kapaz/Serdar field, Quluzade reiterated that the disagreement was exacerbated by Niyazov, and suggested that the two neighbors could likely now divide up their shares and develop the field together amicably.

Quluzade said both countries will feel the pressure of outside forces as they seek to determine whether Turkmenistan will bypass Russia in sending its resources to market. “We will see who wins: the regional super state Russia or the global super state” of the United States, he said.

e. Caspian Presidential Summit Outlines Alternative Gas Routes: Analysts

Original title: *Caspian: Presidential Summit to Explore Gas Options*
Source: *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty/05/19/09. Copyright (c) 2008. RFE/RL, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington DC 20036. Excerpt by OSI Turkmenistan Project.*
Full version: <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2008/05/AF52ABF6-C7D1-4D7B-98C7-F831E13AD9AB.html>

Excerpt: [Passages omitted: on previously strained relations between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan due to poor personal ties of past leaders; background on President Berdymukhamedov's trip to Baku; on Nabucco and trans-Caspian pipelines, aimed at lessening Europe's dependence on Russia for gas export.]

Chary Ihaniyazov, a former Turkmen diplomat now living in Germany, tells RFE/RL's Turkmen Service that the time has come for the two countries to resolve the ownership issue of the Caspian fields.

"Understand that that discussion is not about some petty monetary sum -- the talks are about billions [of dollars] because we are talking about oil deposits," Ihaniyazov says. "And if we cannot resolve the questions [of ownership] today, tomorrow it will be even more difficult to resolve them."

[Passages omitted: on leadership changes potentially opening door to an agreement; on increase of diplomatic overtures and economic cooperation over the last year.]

The current price of natural gas on world markets provides an economic incentive to a Turkmen-Azerbaijani partnership. The likelihood that price will continue to increase makes the business of selling gas a lucrative proposition. The problem is Turkmenistan is not connected to many gas-export pipelines. Most pipelines carrying Turkmen gas belong to Russia's Gazprom. Iran has a relatively modest pipeline connection with Turkmenistan and China is funding the construction of long pipeline to carry Turkmen gas via Kazakhstan to China that optimistically will start operation in 2009. Westward gas exports would require a pipeline spanning the Caspian Sea to connect Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.

[Passage omitted: on possible route across the Caspian Sea through the southern Caucasus and Turkey and the Black Sea to Europe, which could dovetail with Nabucco, the EU-backed pipeline taking Caspian gas from Turkey to Austria.]

Nabucco "presupposes that Caspian and Middle Eastern gas could be pumped through Turkey and the Balkans to Central Europe," says Jennifer DeLay, a consultant for Newsbase, which publishes the "FSU Oil & Gas Monitor." "In order for that happen, though, there had to be a way of getting the gas from the Caspian to Turkey. For Azerbaijan that was easy -- they already had a pipeline plan in place: the South Caucasus Pipeline for Shah Deniz gas. Turkmenistan, however, did not have a direct connection."

[Passage omitted: on failure of Turkmen trans-Caspian pipeline deal sought by Shell in 2000 over disputes on the terms of Shell's payment and changes in terms by Niyazov; on renewed interest of international firms in potential for investment in Turkmenistan and Western governments' need for energy security.]

"The European Union has been very concerned recently about overdependence on Russian gas and a few supply interruptions that happened in 2006-07 have heightened that concern," DeLay says. "The buzzword in Brussels therefore has been 'supply diversification,' and they are looking for ways to reduce their dependence on any one supplier -- Russia, in particular. Nabucco and other projects that offer access to Caspian gas are therefore seen as a way to meet that goal of diversification."

[Passage omitted: on existing Turkmen pledge to supply EU with 10 billion cubic meters of gas in 2009.]

f. Turkmen President, Korean Prime Minister Hold Talks in Ashgabat

Original title: *President of Turkmenistan, Korean Prime Minister Hold Talks in Ashgabat*

Source: turkmenistan.ru/05/17/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project.

Full version: http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=en&elem_id=12796&type=event&sort=date_desc

Synopsis: Korean Prime Minister Han Seung-soo met with President Berdymukhamedov during his official visit to Turkmenistan on May 16, turkmenistan.ru reported. The two nations established an intergovernmental commission to further cooperation in areas such as high technology and industry, including gas and petrochemicals, textiles, machine engineering, shipbuilding, and construction. The Turkmen leader invited Korean companies to join a production-sharing agreement on developing Turkmenistan's hydrocarbon resources in the Caspian Sea.

The Korean prime minister offered South Korea's experience in technology and international trade and banking as well as modernization of power stations, development of offshore oil and gas fields and pipeline and transportation infrastructure. The Korean official also conveyed an invitation to President Berdymukhamedov from President Lee Myung-bak to visit Seoul, and proposed opening air traffic between the two countries as well as educational exchanges.

g. South Korea Preferred Partner for Turkmenistan: Korean Prime Minister

Original title: *Local Companies to Develop Energy in Turkmenistan*

Source: koreatimes.co.kr/05/21/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Full version: http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2008/05/116_24569.html

Synopsis: Prime Minister Han Seung-soo met with Turkmen President Berdymukhamedov for 70 minutes on May 16 as part of a tour of Central Asian and Caucasian capitals, The Korea Times reported.

The Turkmen president said he is "eager to partner with Korean firms to develop three big oil fields at sea," The Korea Times quoted Han as saying. "He also expressed the intention of opening the door for Korean firms for the development of gas and oil on land."

Han said the Turkmen leader had rejected offers from other major oil firms seeking access to Turkmenistan's hydrocarbon resources, but indicated he preferred Korea as a partner. President Berdymukhamedov said he hoped to increase cooperation with the Korean government for energy development. Turkmenistan has a total of 32 undeveloped oil fields. Berdymukhamedov promised to "give" three good ones to Korean firms, Han quoted the president as saying.

h. OSCE Seminar on Legal Reform in Turkmenistan

Original title: *First OSCE Meeting on Legal Reform Held in Turkmenistan*

Source: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)/05/15/08

Full version: <http://www.osce.org/item/31108.html>

The first in a series of OSCE workshops aimed at providing lawmakers in Turkmenistan with tools for an effective legal reform process has held May 14-15 in Ashgabat. The two-day meeting was organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat at the invitation of the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights of Turkmenistan.

"We hope that this workshop has helped fostering a better understanding of the role of law-making processes in the development and modernization of society," said Robert Adams, deputy head of the ODIHR's Democratization Department. "The design of effective domestic mechanisms enabling government and parliamentary bodies to oversee the process of law-drafting is of particular importance."

The meeting focused on policy development, impact assessment and the mechanics of legislation. Other OSCE participating states' experiences in this field were discussed. The meeting brought together senior officials from the Parliament, Supreme Court, Prosecutor's Office, National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights and ministries involved in Turkmenistan's lawmaking process and legal reform.

The ODIHR earlier this year provided the country's authorities with an assessment of election-related legislation as part of the OSCE's support to strengthening Turkmenistan's rule of law. The OSCE Centre plans to continue supporting the legal reform, including through the provision of a series of legislative assessments and study visits to parliaments of OSCE participating states.

i. OSCE High Commissioner on Minorities Visits Turkmenistan

Original title: *OSCE High Commissioner in Turkmenistan to Discuss Education and National Minorities, Legal Reforms*

Source: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/osce.org/05/22/08

Full version: <http://www.osce.org/item/31264.html>

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Knut Vollebaek, met Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov on May 21 to discuss national minority issues and support for the country's efforts to modernize its education system.

Ambassador Vollebaek, who is in Turkmenistan for a three-day visit, is also meeting high-level officials on legal reforms, in particular Turkmenistan's plans to amend its constitution. He offered the support of his office, and agreed that it would make proposals for educational and constitutional reforms.

"There are important developments taking place in Turkmenistan – a new constitution will be debated and reforms in all spheres of life are taking place," said Vollebaek.

"My institution is ready to support Turkmenistan in complying with international standards. In this context it is also important to emphasize that national minorities living in Turkmenistan should be able to communicate their needs and aspirations to the authorities."

The High Commissioner also visited the country's Lebap region to get a firsthand assessment of Turkmenistan's progress with national minority issues in education.

"My meetings with schoolchildren, teachers and those studying to be teachers made it clear that they welcomed the changes that have already taken place. I look forward to further progress," he said.

j. U.S. Defense University Delegation Visits Turkmenistan

Original title: *Expanding Turkmen-American Cooperation*

Source: Official Turkmen government website/05/16/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project.

Full version: <http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/en/?idr=1&id=080517b>

Synopsis: A delegation from the US National Defense University arrived in the Turkmen capital on May 16, the official Turkmen government website reported. During their stay in Turkmenistan, the guests were received at the foreign and defense ministries of Turkmenistan and visited Ashgabat's universities and institutes, including the Military Institute and the National Institute of World Languages. The US delegation also planned to visit a sea division of the State Border Service of Turkmenistan and the Gowdan-Bajgiran checkpoint [on the Turkmen-Iranian border].

2. DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

a. New Turkmen Memorial Complex “Outstrips” Niyazov’s Ostentation

Original title: *Turkmen Tower Gets Place in Sun*

Source: *The Moscow Times/Associated Press*/05/20/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Full version: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/1010/42/362869.htm>

Synopsis: Turkmenistan plans a new \$70 million monument in its capital that will "outstrip anything built during the ostentatious rule of the late dictator Saparmurat Niyazov," according to an AP report in *The Moscow Times*. The 185-meter monument [to the Turkmen constitution] will be twice as tall as the golden statue of Niyazov that rotates with the sun, which is to be removed from the city center to the suburbs. The memorial complex is to be a "symbol of a new era for Turkmenistan," President Berdimukhamedov said, according to *Neitral'niy Turkmenistan*.

b. President Lauds Turkmenistan’s Rights on Constitution Day

Original title: *Turkmen Leader Notes Country's Adherence to Human Rights Norms*. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Source: *BBC Monitoring--Central Asia*/05/19/08/*Turkmen TV Altyn Asyr*/05/18/08

Synopsis: President Berdimukhamedov praised Turkmenistan's dedication to democracy and human rights at a ceremony launching the construction of a 185-meter monument to the constitution in Ashgabat, broadcast on state television May 18. "The steps we are taking in our daily policy in terms of deepening

principles of democracy and humanism are actually unique in world practice," the president said. He added that Turkmenistan was eager to make use of "the most advanced international experience" in this field.

"The priority of the interests of the individual and adherence to universally accepted and civilized norms of human rights are the basics of our state policy," he said. The Turkmen leader stated that the monument would symbolize "Turkmenistan's adherence to its basic law, the constitution and thus, become a national treasure."

c. Turkmen President Reprimands Communications Minister

Original title: Minister of Communications of Turkmenistan Severely Reprimanded

Source: turkmenistan.ru/05/19/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Full version: http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=en&elem_id=12815&type=event&sort=date_desc

Synopsis: President Berdymukhamedov issued a severe reprimand to Communications Minister Resulberdi Hojagurbanov, turkmenistan.ru reported. The minister was warned he faced dismissal for failing to ensure the sound system worked properly during a May 18 ceremony to mark Turkmenistan's Constitution Day. The president dismissed Annaly Berdinobatov, the deputy minister of communications, for "shortcomings in work and failure to fulfill his duties." Berdinobatov had earlier suffered a presidential reprimand for delays in developing the Internet in Turkmenistan.

d. Civic Activist Sentenced to 12 Years in Turkmenistan

Original title: Turkmenistan: Human Rights Activist Valery Pal Sentenced to 12 years Imprisonment

Source: ferghana.ru/05/15/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Full version: <http://enews.ferghana.ru/news.php?id=314&mode=snews&PHPSESSID=a768a72b56724e203b9da8407f8fb86c>

Synopsis: A Turkmen court sentenced civic activist Valery Pal, a citizen of Turkmenistan and Russia, to 12 years of imprisonment on May 14 in a maximum-security colony, ferghana.ru reported. Pal had pleaded innocent, but the court rejected all his attorney's objections regarding violations of due process. Pal was arrested February 21 and eventually charged with embezzlement, accusations that human rights groups suspected were related to his activism.

The Turkmen Democratic Civil Union said Pal had worked in a refinery in Turkmenbashi much of his life and became publicly active in 1993, helping NGOs connect to the Internet and taking on various social causes. He campaigned actively against the renaming the town of Krasnovodsk to Turkmenbashi.

e. Azerbaijan's \$44.8 M Debt Repayment to Fund Turkmen Education System

Original title: Turkmenistan to Use Azerbaijan's Gas Debt Payment for Development of Education System

Source: turkmenistan.ru/05/19/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project.

Full version: http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=en&elem_id=12811&type=event&sort=date_desc

Synopsis: President Berdymukhamedov has instructed that Azerbaijan's repayment of its gas debt to Turkmenistan, a total of US \$44.8 million, should be transferred to the Reserve Fund and used for developing Turkmenistan's education system, turkmenistan.ru reported. The payment was made following the two countries' recent settlement of a dispute over natural gas deliveries.

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations have been prepared by OSI's Turkmenistan Project.

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